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Editorial.

Welcome to H. E. Lord Linlithgow, the Viceroy. On behalf of the Madras Agricultural Students' Union, we offer our hearty welcome to H. E. Lord Linlithgow who has taken over the reins of Government in India this month. As Chairman of the Royal Commission on Agriculture he has acquired a very clear picture of the agricultural conditions and problems in every province. That he will take an abiding interest in the rural uplift is amply evident from his recent utterances in England prior to his leaving for India. His monumental industry, his tireless attention to details, and the thoroughness and quickness of grasp with which he tackles problems, are all familiar to those who have watched him during his Chairmanship of the Royal Commission in India. We are sure that during his regime as Viceroy of India there will be a great stimulus given not only to the development of Agriculture, the primary industry of this vast continent, but also to several well thought out measures intended to ameliorate the condition of the vast masses who depend on land for their bare existence.

Agricultural Associations. Among the agencies thought of, to supplement the propaganda work of the Agricultural Department, the Agricultural Associations might be considered quite important. There is no doubt that such associations could be utilised to disseminate knowledge of agricultural improvement. In our own province, even 30 years ago, there were in existence several District Agricultural Associations with a Central Committee in Madras. Although in the flush of enthusiasm, some useful work was done by these

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associations in the beginning, the enthusiasm soon waned and it was found difficult to get the Associations to undertake any practical demonstration of agricultural improvements advocated by the Department. The movement was probably premature and the Central Agricultural Committee had to be wound up, the district associations soon following suit. Among the causes for such failure might be mentioned:— (1) the associations consisted generally of men who did not have a direct interest on land, (2) the associations tried to cover too big an area to permit of the concentration of a particular activity in a definite area, (3) the associations were brought into existence by the enthusiasm displayed by one or two particular individuals rather than by a general desire on the part of the people in the villages (4) Due to the paucity of trained staff in the Agricultural Department the associations could not get much of the technical help necessary. The last difficulty has to a certain extent been overcome by the expansion of the Agricultural Department in recent years, there being roughly one Agricultural Demonstrator for each revenue taluq of a district. The only means of overcoming the other difficulties would be to make the association really rural, the actual cultivators making up its strength. We are glad the Director of Agriculture, Madras, in his opening speech at the Nellore District Agricultural Association rightly pointed out the need for starting the associations first in villages, which alone would result in real work connected with rural uplift being done. The experience gained in other Provinces also points out definitely that the smaller the area for which the association is intended the greater are the possibilities of its doing really useful work. If we should benefit from our early experiences it is necessary that we should begin first at the bottom by forming village or *firka* associations and later co-ordinating their work by linking them up with taluq or district associations.

With the increasing interest paid to Agriculture in recent times, the question of forming agricultural associations has again come up for consideration in several parts of the province. Among the several Government Departments, the Revenue Department naturally wields considerable amount of influence and regard among the land-owning classes and there is no doubt, that any association with the revenue officials actively co-operating in its work, is bound to be more productive of results. Sir Charles Souter, the Revenue Member to the Government of Madras when he presided over the Agricultural Conference in Coimbatore last August drew pointed attention to the necessity of the officers of the various Departments interested in rural welfare, actively co-operating and seeking the advice and help of the Revenue Officials. We are glad to note that a beginning has been made in some districts to carry into effect the suggestions of the Revenue Member. The Deputy Director of Agriculture Second Circle, had approached the District Collectors in his Circle to form

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Agricultural Associations one in each revenue *firka* of the district. His suggestion to make the revenue inspector of each *firka*, the President of such association, has been accepted by the District Collectors and the Board of Revenue and a number of associations have been recently brought into existence in Guntur District. The members of these associations are all influential and bonafide ryots actually interested in the improvement of agriculture. The example set up by Guntur is, we understand, being followed by other districts in the Second Circle, Kistna and Nellore.

The main objects of these associations are stated to be:—(1) to introduce better methods of cultivation, (2) to introduce heavy yielding strains of crops recommended by the Agricultural Department and also to actually test new strains of crops in the locality to supplement the results obtained at the Government Research Stations, and (3) to arrange, if possible, for the proper marketing of the produce of the ryots. The associations will get the technical help of the Demonstrators, and the Demonstrator usually having the jurisdiction of a whole taluq will have a number of trained demonstration *maistries* under him, probably one for each *firka*. The programme of work for the associations will, we expect, be drawn up by the officers of the Agricultural Department who are familiar with the local conditions. If only the members of these associations take a living interest in the work and undertake to carry out the improvements suggested by the Department, we are sure some tangible results can be achieved. Probably, after some time these associations could be utilised to bring about improvements in the village in other spheres as well, as for example, rural sanitation, public health, education, etc., the members of the concerned Government Departments working through these associations. In course of time there should be a large number of groups of villages trying their best to help themselves in all rural welfare work. We wish all success to the new venture undertaken in the second circle which we hope will be copied and extended to all the districts in the Presidency.

It was a surprise to see that a member of the local legislative council during the recent budget session criticised the work of the Agricultural Department by stating that the Department had done 'next to nothing'. While several of his sweeping statements can be readily refuted by actual facts, he was inclined to blame the Agricultural Department for all the difficulties which the cultivator is labouring under in these days of general depression. We are gratified, however, that another member of the council while commending the work of the Department stressed upon the necessity for the co-operation of the non-officials in the propaganda work. We are glad he particularly mentioned about the work of these newly formed agricultural associations and recommended the extension of such activities in other districts.